

A Galaxy in the Balance: Octavian's Devious Offer, Adora's Peach-Haired Girlfriend, the Crystal Gems, and Jack's Momentous Realization

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A Galaxy in the Balance: Octavian's Devious Offer, Adora's Peach-Haired Girlfriend, the Crystal Gems, and Jack's Momentous Realization

by [lefemmerouge](#)

Summary

Battle on Mayet! With the unexpected departure of the Gem fleet due to the designs of the hacker Peridots who want to overthrow the Diamond Authority, the fight remains on the planet's surface. The forces of evil make their way inside the city's shields, setting the stage for a tense encounter between Cleo and Octavian. Will she take his offer, or will she retreat to fight another day?

Captain Lars commands a liberated Gem warship, on which Steven and Pearl are recovering, with Adora, Catra, and Connie comforting them. As tensions run high, can these newfound friends of Cleo help her in her time of need, even though they have never heard of Octavian nor know of the power he holds?

Mayet is still on edge, as Octavian forces a confrontation with Octavian and the Gem army continues their invasion of the planet to make it another colony of the Diamonds. How will the heroes defeat these villains? And...will the relationship between Cleo and Callie be repaired?

You'll have to read to find out the answers to these questions...

Notes

This story is set after episode 19 ("Vacation") of Cleopatra in Space and the "Change Your Mind" series finale of Steven Universe. LDD stands for Liberated Diamond Destroyer, RT for Rutile Twins, Pappy for Padparadscha, GDA for Great Diamond Fleet, GDM for Great Diamond Military, and PAST for Peri Autonomous Sailing Talisman. The tanks would look something like the Diamond at the top of [this page](#). Also, this story has some ["My Dragon Girlfriend" vibes](#). It's an ongoing cute comic with a lot of gay energy on Tapas and Webtoon about a bisexual girl, Christy, and her girlfriend, Dani, which can turn into a dragon, and a bunch of other characters. Check it out! They just posted a new issue a couple days ago.

Comments are welcome and appreciated.

Update on 5/13/25: This fic has been cross-posted [on Squidge World](#) under the title "A Galaxy Out of Balance: Octavian's Devious Offer, Adora's Peach-Haired Girlfriend, the Crystal Gems, and Jack's Realization." I revised the text to that version, with changes to the

structure of the paragraphs, dialogue, and other wording, overwriting the previously flawed text, including a section which made Connie seem not intelligent. You can read the original, non-revised, version [on Wattpad](#).

See the end of the work for [more notes](#)

Admiral Jack immediately ordered his compatriots to search the area for Octavian. The huge [shining and sparkling](#) *Esperanzas*, the tanks of this Gem army, opened fire. These vehicles had a pointed front and slimmed-down sides, armored vehicles unique to the GDM itself. The shield around Mayet easily repelled the attack, even though each projectile destabilized the shield's surface further. Khensu, Garnet, Amethyst, and Callie watched this from the P.Y.R.A.M.I.D. academic building, under the impression that it was safe.

Cleo, with Mihos wrapped around her neck, sat near Akila, weakened from the Xerxs' laser blasts earlier that day. Brian continued to tinker with technology, as he always did. Yosira had left to rally people to struggle against those invading Mayet, whether Gems or Xerxs. Suddenly, the sounds of metallic moving gears, and feet hitting the earthen ground with precision, filled the air. Before anyone knew it, the Xerxs had walked through the shield's barrier and were on the inside. Khensu could not understand how this occurred until he saw Khepra heading the unit. This shook him to the core.

He felt *betrayed and angry*, so much so that he wanted to bolt out the window and tackle her. Cleo and the others were able to restrain him. What happened next made them shake with dread. Octavian appeared from behind the Xerxs, battered and sore. He wanted to go after Jack, as he had a score to settle, but stumbled upon Cleo and her comrades *first*. He still believed he had an immense amount of strength. He hooted and yelled into the empty air, pressing a button on a remote control handed to him by Khepra, which deactivated the Xerxs, showing them to be nothing more than set pieces.

"Come out, come out, Cleopatra...I challenge you to a winner-takes-all contest. If you win, we leave Mayet forever. If you lose, you will be forced to be *bonded to me*...forever!"

Cleo considered this offer. While it seemed risky, she wanted to take this opportunity in order to put Octavian in his rightful place. Khensu and a debilitated Akila warned her against it. Amethyst and Garnet encouraged it, vowing to be her back up in case a scuffle broke out. Although Cleo doubted it, Callie pledged to do the same. Even with Cleo's dismissiveness, she did not need an excuse to protect her crush from harm. Bounding out the window, Cleo did a few flips through the air and landed in front of Octavian. She snorted, and leaned in. She told him, "I'm ready to kick your ass, Dorktavian." He guffawed and accepted her challenge.

Octavian cackled, holding onto his curved sickle-like sword, called the Sword of Kebechet. He tried to act as tough as he could, even though he hurt all over from the injuries caused by the crash and the slices by Admiral Jack's sword during their brawl on Octavianus. He was not alone in this. Cleo also tried to appear "threatening."

She had a sinking suspicion he would win, making her like the slaves she observed every day when she lived in Ancient Egypt. She thrashed her head from side-to-side and stamped her foot down, determined to battle to the end. She told herself, *I am Princess Cleopatra, not just a common bloke! This jerk will get what's coming to him*. As she drew her quasar, Octavian readied his sword to counter her blows. Both would clash to the bitter end, something the French, billions of light years away on Earth, [called á outrance](#), a term that not even Yosira, with her worldly knowledge, had heard of.

As Cleo and Octavian prepared themselves to clash, Khensu snuck off and went behind a column. He sent a video message to Lars and the Off Colors. While strongly believing in the right of individuals to make their own decisions, he knew that Cleo's choice to come to blows with Octavian was foolheartedly. If she lost, the whole galaxy could fall into the clutches of evil, with Xerxs oppressing the masses, destroying *more* records, and committing other heinous acts. Cleo served as their best hope to defeat evil from spreading its roots across the galaxy. While she had done a decent job up to this point, if he won, all that progress would be for naught. Finally, the call went through, with Lars answering, even with the static. "Hey, Khensu, what's up?"

Clearing his throat, Khensu explained that the fate of the galaxy could be in jeopardy. Like always, his paws rose to emphasize certain points he made to Lars. "Cleo is sparing with Octavian...if he wins it could doom *everything*! We have to..."

Lars cut him off as he raised his eyebrow, unsure of what Khensu was saying. He had heard of Octavian from Cleo the day before, but he did not know who Octavian really was, whether a friend, villain, or *something else*. Before going ahead, he wanted immediate clarification from Khensu. "Wait. Stop for a second. Who is Octavian? I know Cleo mentioned him before..."

Khensu bobbed his head from side-to-side. He grumbled at the fact he had to describe their villain. He realized it would be for the best since Lars had already served as a great ally. "I'll tell you. He's a big bad man who wants to enslave all of those in the galaxy under his rule. According to the records I've read, in the library, he is immortal, and if true, Cleo can't face him alone, even with her powers. She's new to this whole saving the galaxy thing. Please, help in whatever way you can. I'm begging you."

Lars scratched his head. While he had explored places such as Gargantia and Etheria, with his crew, he felt more comfortable to stay in place on the liberated Gem ship rather than fighting on the surface. Realizing that Adora, Catra, Pearl, Steven, and Connie were onboard, he assured Khensu he could deliver. "That sounds bad. I'll see what I can do. I won't let Cleo battle that monster on her own."

Lars clicked off the viewscreen and told Rhodonite to stand-in as captain while he traveled down to the medical bay. She nodded, as did Pappy and RT. He moved from the bridge and took the elevator to another part of the ship. He anticipated that he could recruit either Adora, Catra, Pearl, Steven, or Connie for this important mission.

Walking into the first room, he saw Connie sitting in a chair by the bed, her head on her hand, while Steven lay fast asleep. Lars asked her about Steven and how she was doing. "So, Connie, what's the haps? How's Steven?"

Connie shook her head. She conveyed her worry about Steven, after his use of energy to keep them all safe from the Gem fleet had *exhausted him*. She had promised to stay by his side. "Lars, I'm really concerned about Steven. His power has never been this drained before. I'm not sure what I can do for him since *I'm not a Gem*."

Sighing, Lars reminded her that it did not matter if she was a Gem, as she could support him by being a reliable friend and a good person. He believed his words could get her out of this

funk. "Connie, *you don't* need to be a Gem to be there for him. He has so many human friends and family. You are one piece of that. You and Steven have a deep connection. I mean, you can, and have, fused together into Stevonnie. Remember, fusion is the height of relationships."

She smiled back. Lars' words had lifted her self-esteem. She much felt better. Even so, she wondered why Lars had come to visit her and Steven since he was the captain of this ship, that Pearl, Adora, and Catra had liberated from the Gems, after all. "I appreciate you coming, but why'd you come down to visit? You have a ship to run..."

Lars chuckled. He understood what she was saying. While she had only seen him as a captain when he led the *Sun Incinerator* in the skirmish against Emerald, he realized she was concerned he was caring more for her than his crew. He had to dispell this false idea before it festers too long.

"I wanted to check on two of my best friends and...well...there's *a situation* on the planet surface. Some evil guy might bring ruin to the universe, yada yada. You should care for Steven. I'll get the others..."

Connie cut him off, bounding from her chair. She suddenly pounded her feet on the ground. "I want to go! Steven will get better...*by fighting!*"

Lars shook his head. Not aware of how powerful this "Octavian" was, he dreaded that this evil dude would mar Connie and Steven. As a responsible person, he wanted to protect his friends. "Connie, I understand your enthusiasm, but this evil guy is immortal or something. I'll ask Pearl, Adora, and that new girl, to aid Cleo instead. As soon as Steven is at full strength, you can both go down there and battle alongside him. *I promise.*"

Accepting his reasoning, Connie demurred. She decided to not push her viewpoint, not this time. Lars waved his hand and stepped outside the room. The door closed behind him. While she wanted to aid her friends, new and old, Connie knew that serving as moral support for her boyfriend was also important.

Walking across the vestibule of the next suite, he saw Catra sitting in a chair growling. Adora comforted Pearl, saying sweet things while she laid on the bed next to her. This open display of affection was a lot, even for Lars. He tiptoed inside and announced himself, one eye looking at Catra, the other at Adora and Pearl. "Hiya, Adora, Pearl...and Catra. What's the haps?"

Catra rolled her eyes and pointed her finger at the bedstead. Adora resumed her hugging of Pearl, then began kissing her on the neck. She whispered in Pearl's ear, "come on, sweetie, it's time to get up. Everyone wants to see *your* cute face." Red blood coursed through Catra's veins as her cheeks became hot, as did much of her face, neck, and part of her chest. While she would have uttered inappropriate remarks, as others did when they were embarrassed, she did not do so. Instead, she froze in place, not even a tear coming down her cheek.

Observing Adora's adoration toward Pearl put Lars in an awkward position, simply because of jealousy. He wondered if Catra felt the same as he did. To break the silence, he cleared his

throat. Pearl shot up like a rocket and smiled. "Hey, Lars. Just here with my gf and...uh... Catra too. After everything, I feel a bit dizzy but less than before, which is good!"

Glad to see that she was awake and alert, Lars took a deep breath. After convincing Connie not to travel to Mayet's surface, he remained confident that Pearl, Adora, and Catra would help instead. Brushing his hair back with his left hand, he stepped closer to a weakened Pearl. "I have a big favor to ask you. I'd like you, Adora, and Catra, to assist Cleo. She's fighting with this guy who wants to destroy the universe. She is trying to face him alone and Khensu is worried that she might lose and the whole galaxy will be destroyed or something."

Pearl's ears perked up, as did Adora's. Before Pearl could say anything, Adora moved closer to Lars and planted her foot firmly on the floor. She made a bold declaration. "I'll go. My gf will come along with me. Catra is welcome too. I care about her *too*..."

Pearl embraced Adora and giggled. She turned to Adora and said softly, "of course, I'll go with you, Dor, I wouldn't leave your side for a second." Catra accepted what Adora said as her fate. She gave a curt rejoinder. "Fine, I'll go too. I don't want to be left on this metal death trap."

Lars accepted their terms and gave them tips for how to reach the escape pods. The *OCAC*, which they had used to get inside the ship, remained in the docking bay, but was too damaged for space travel. Wishing them adieu, Lars entered an elevator which took him back to the bridge. Thanks to directions from Lars, Catra, Adora, and Pearl reached the area of the ship which held the pods. Tightly squeezing inside one, Catra took the initiative and pressed a red button with the word "EJECT" written on top.

Speeding through space, Catra screamed in terror, while Adora put one arm around Catra and another around Pearl, remarking at the beauty of space, in awe of what she could see from the craft. Pearl appreciated this gesture, as did Catra, who had repressed her romantic feelings for Adora. The latter resulted in a lower self-worth as she questioned if her attractions were real or something made up in her head.

The clash between Cleo and Octavian had begun. Originally attacking him with her quasar, she dropped it, and proceeded to use a two-sided electrified staff, countering each of his blows. As he laughed maniacally, he easily blocked each of her strikes, and taunted her. "Is that really the best you can do? I thought you were the savior of the galaxy, *Cleopatra*."

Cleo did not take such insults lightly. However, her sassiness balanced it out, meaning that she could control her emotions and channel them into the proper zinger. She sneered at him in an attempt to impugn his pride. "Hey, Dorktavian, otherwise known as Emperor Pinkletoes, you can't beat me. I have my..."

Unexpectedly, Cleo broke into song. Words poured out of her mouth in perfect harmony. Octavian remained aghast since he had nothing to counter her beautiful singing voice. It began with a mediocre opening stanza. She formed a fist, and brought it up near her mouth, acting like she was holding a microphone in the same hand.

♪ If I'm feeling blue

My friends will help me through

We are gonna wreck you

We'll be cackling. 🎵

Akila, Brian, Amethyst, Garnet, Khensu, and Callie were watching, confused about what was happening. Cleo motioned them to join in. Soon, each of them tried to sing along. Each line echoed across the landscape as everyone followed Cleo's lead. "Hey there. We got allies in the sky," Cleo sang, followed by Callie joining in, ad-libbing the words "like a shooting star, we will go sky-high." This did not rhyme but *no one cared*. Everyone joined with the final words of the chorus, "we stand by one another, oh yeah!" followed by Cleo singing one more stanza as they all went on the attack:

🎵 When things go south

We stand by each other

We won't back down

'Cause we got one another! 🎵

Garnet then belted out the words "Here comes the heroes, hell yeah" three times. Cleo followed this by singing the song's last line, unabashedly, without shame: "on Cleo's team, friendship never stops!"

All the vocals bombarded Octavian, making him feel a little disoriented, while he attempted to fight seven people at once. He closed his eyes and concentrated, setting his sword in the ground and kneeling. He soon emitted a huge energy wave toward Cleo and her friends, scattering them in many directions. In the process, Garnet and Amethyst were poofed, Akila lay injured on the ground, Brian had gashes in his robot body, Callie had skinned knees and arms, and Khensu had bruises everywhere. Somehow, Cleo survived the assault. She hobbled over to him. She thought she had lost. She began to think that she had made a mistake in accepting his offer to fight.

Yosira, fellow P.Y.R.A.M.I.D. students, Professor Sitre, and their allies, attacked. They had an easy shot at Octavian since he had deactivated the Xerxs. Octavian, howling in pain, fell to the ground. The fact that a bunch of quasars hurt him so badly, angered him. Sure, Admiral Jack had grievously injured him, as did the crash landing, but nothing stung like laser bolts. He gnashed his teeth and stood up, and waved his sword in a circular motion, releasing another greenish energy blast. As the energy wave neared those with the laser guns, some ducked and were able to avoid it.

Others were not as lucky. They were thrown backward, even into Mayet City itself, to the horror of everyone watching the scene unfold. Octavian then threw a few small balls onto the ground, and using his strength, created a line of Xerxs-like warriors. There not comprised of robotic material, but of magical sinew from himself, making them harder to kill. They aimed their cannons. Octavian gave Cleo another offer, supposing that she would not refuse it under

any circumstances. "We have you surrounded. I will spare your friends if you come with me, quietly. *You have lost.*"

Cleo coughed. Hoisting herself up from the dirt with her two-sided staff, she inched forward tentatively. She refused to buckle to his demands, despite her prior verbal agreement. His attack enfeebled her, but it had not broken her resolve. "I will never...never give up. Even if die...it will be worth it!"

With Khensu and Akila unconscious, Amethyst, Ruby, and Sapphire's Gems sitting on the ground, Callie was still conscious, but barely. She had been hurt by the energy wave too. She shouted out, "no, Cleopatra, don't do it! You have so much to live for." Weakly, Cleo responded, "I *have to*. I must be a martyr for the Nile Galaxy. It's why I was chosen as the savior." Callie understood, and collapsed, beginning to cry. Rolling her eyes, she sauntered over and grimaced at her next task, wanting to make Callie happy before her possible death.

"Callie...I know you have the hots for me...while I personally, even after all you have done for me in the last couple days, *still* don't like you...if you'd like me to kiss you or something, as a parting gift, just tell me...your happiness is important to me...as a...uh...friend."

This surprised Callie. She never expected Cleo be *so considerate*. Respecting Cleo was important to her. She did not want to make Cleo more uncomfortable. So, she simplified her request, putting aside a smooch or anything like that. Speaking softly, she voiced her wish. "A hug would be nice...sure, we don't see eye to eye, but I don't want your last moments to be awkward."

Cleo obliged and embraced her, promising she would give her a "present" if she ended up surviving Octavian's onslaught. Callie did not have any idea what she meant and entered a state of unconsciousness not long after. Steadying herself on her feet, Cleo grabbed her two-sided staff and wielded it with intent. She believed this would be her last moments alive. The prophecy seemed to be wrong, or so she thought. Accepting her fate, she walked in the direction of Octavian, who grinned like a Cheshire Cat, ready to strike her down. He compelled the Xerxs, which he had created, to dissipate into thin air, clearly only a parlor trick of sorts.

Out of the blue, an escape pod came crashing down, knocking Octavian back. Pearl, Adora, and Catra jumped out, and stood in front of Cleo, to her shock. They made it clear that Octavian would not lay a finger on their friend, not on their watch. Adora spoke for the group. "Hey, back away from Cleo, man. You are nothing better than a pile of trash. Going around destroying planets, enslaving people, controlling them to be your little minions in your perfect empire. You are the one who should surrender because we're gonna kick your ass."

Octavian chuckled. He was not above insulting those he fought against, even if the words he said were hurtful, mean, or disturbing. He did not care about the feelings of others. "That's a lot of verbiage from a person with a blond hair poof atop her head, you scrawny weakling. This brawl is between me and Cleo...and no one else."

Adora was at a loss for words. Cleo cowered behind her new friends. Pearl stepped in front of Adora and summoned her spear and was ready for combat. She angrily yelled in response and

demanded he apologize to Adora for uttering something so hurtful. "How dare you call *my* Adora a name. You take that back, you beast! If you don't say sorry, I'll blast you to kingdom come, jerkoff."

Octavian shook his head and wielded his sword menacingly. He would not agree to her demand. He shut his eyes and declared: "so be it."

Roaring as loud as she could, Pearl emitted one of her most powerful blasts yet, hitting Octavian squarely in the chest. The forcefulness and strength of her attack caused him to stumble. The pure gay energy, deriving from a deep place inside Pearl's Gem, overwhelmed him. He staggered in retreat and asked that Cleo call it off. She stepped forward, and weakly told him, "NO! We came battle you and that's what we are going to do."

Octavian, while reeling from their attacks, was determined to persist despite his current condition. Catra and Adora locked arms, which Catra accepted as a *necessity of combat*. Pearl picked up the Gems of Ruby, Sapphire, and Amethyst, and began to fuse with them. A massive being, named Alexandrite, with six arms and bright magenta skin, appeared. Their eyes were covered by a dark indigo visor. She had a large mouth with a set of sharp teeth and a long tongue, coupled with thick turquoise hair, combining the hair styles of Pearl, Ruby, Sapphire, and Amethyst, with her face serving as a mask of sorts. She towered over Octavian and opened her mouth, emitting a plume of fire, causing him to be pushed rearward and onto his knees. Even so, he wanted to push them back no matter what. He hoisted his sword, saying he would neither be deterred nor [afeared](#) of the conflict to come.

He grated Alexandrite's skin. His weapon could do little, except make a small scratch. Like before, he began to focus, channeling all his energy into the sword, resulting in yet another energy wave, which disintegrated Alexandrite, causing Pearl, Garnet, and Amethyst to land on the ground. Adora and Catra, who had been ready to strike the next blow, stepped back. Feeling powerful, Octavian thought he could defeat anyone. A second pod crashed nearby, and two individuals jumped out: Connie and a re-energized Steven. The liberated *Trilliant Splitter* stood on standby, in position to assist. The *PAST*, the automated starfighter created by Peri back on Earth, could lend a hand as well.

Octavian grumbled, not wanting to face yet another enemy. Steven floated the idea that they combine their power, harnessing it together into one critical strike. Amethyst, Garnet, and Pearl agreed, as did Connie, Adora, Catra, and even a debilitated Cleo. While Adora shouted "For the Honor of Greyskull!," transforming into an eight-foot-tall warrior woman named She-Ra, Cleo harnessed her pink power, and the Gems prepared themselves. As Catra and Connie lunged their swords forward, Pearl released a blast from her spear, Garnet shot her gloves as missiles, Amethyst used her electrified whip, Steven used his pink energy, and Cleo used her untapped abilities which she could call upon at any time when she thought of home.

They blew Octavian away. Little did they know, but Admiral Jack could sense him coming. He quickly ran forth, outstretched his katana, and waited for Octavian to fall. As the Gems and their newfound friends celebrated their victory, they were stunned to see *someone* stab Octavian from behind. The sword coursed right through Octavian's heart. Cleo, Steven, Garnet, Connie, Catra, Adora, and Pearl faced him, scurrying from the plaza nearby the

P.Y.R.A.M.I.D. dorms. He laughed and tried to scare them away. "I've vanquished your foe and now it's time to lay down your weapons. You will *never* beat me."

Octavian croaked, warning them to not accept Jack's terms. He added, in his dying words, "Cleopatra, I asked for your aid...but you refused...I get it...but...please have mercy."

Remembering *all the evil* he had caused in the galaxy and how he had tried to kill her more than once, she scoffed. She refused to be lenient or sympathetic. While some people could be redeemed, Octavian was not one of them, in her mind, not even close. Her words would be the last ones he would ever hear. "You deserve no pity or forgiveness. Your crimes are unparalleled. I will not weep when you die. With your death, my role as the savior of the galaxy is fulfilled and I can be free. Bye Dorktavian, I won't miss you one bit, you can be sure of that, mister."

Octavian fell limp. The whipping wind dispersed the bits and pieces of his body. The goodness inherent in Jack's katana, formed by the gods of Jack's universe, destroyed Octavian's essence. Everyone reeled from Cleo's harsh words. Jack picked up his sword and faced them. Calling up his Gem forces, he stood in front of them, with their weapons drawn. He proclaimed their imminent demise.

"Evil will reign across this galaxy! The Diamonds will be *fair rulers*...you will all have a place in this empire. All you have to do is surrender to me. Lay down your arms."

Steven snickered. He could not imagine that someone would believe propaganda from the Diamonds and be serious about it. He knew that this man, named "Jack," could not beat them. He took out his communicator, walked toward this villain, and spoke into it. "Lars, we need that backup...now! This jerk thinks he can take us on!"

The communicator crackled. Lars knew what Steven's words meant and prepared his crew. He believed they could win with the ship's superior firepower. He quickly answered.

"Aye, Steven! Sending the *PAST* your way. Getting the ship into position. Over and out."

Jack did not see any difference. He thought Steven had been bluffing until he saw a slim ship speed over the landscape, its cannons blasting at full strength, blowing up everything in its path. The Gem soldiers ran in panic as their compatriots were poofed all around them. Jack released his sword from his grasp as he dropped to his knees. Everything seemed to be falling apart. Steven came in closer. Jack aggressively resisted, resuming a fighting stance. Steven tried to exert a calming presence and made his intent clear. "I don't want to hurt you, Jack...let's just talk. We don't need to fight."

Jack lunged toward him, crying out. He refused the help of anyone who told him how to make himself "better," even though Steven was doing nothing of the sort. Steven countered Jack's fists with boxing gloves of-sorts, consisting of pink bubbles covering his fists. "I can solve my own problems! You can't change how I feel!"

Steven nodded. He knew Jack was correct. He did not want any misunderstanding.

"You are right. I can't change how you think of yourself...only *you* can. I know there is good in you. I can sense it. It's there...even if it's deep down and buried within you."

Jack's mind control began to form its last fracture. When on Octavianus, and earlier, some cracks had formed. What Steven told him caused the gap between his true self and the one created through the mind control of Blue, Yellow, and White Diamond became a chasm. He stepped back and tried to ward Steven away as he fought to regain control of his body. Jack had dealt with such an issue before. However, the Diamonds' action was more severe than anything Aku tried to do, as it had become deeply ingrained in his being. He shouted. "I... can't take this anymore! I'm not evil...what have I become? Who am I?"

Wriggling, he soon regained control of his mental abilities. He raised his katana and concentrated all evil essence into the blade, pushing it into the ground, as his father had done with Aku, imprisoning it for a temporary time. Steven, the Gems, and their friends concentrated their powers and blasted this seeping evil, causing the mind-controlled version of Jack to be completely obliterated. Tuckered out, Jack approached them and bowed. He surprised everyone.

"I don't know what happened. Last I can remember, clearly, I was in a palace after being transported there from some planet named Etheria...then, these beings called Diamonds used their powers on my mind to make me their slave...everything else is fuzzy. I can recall bits and pieces but that's all...I'm sorry if I caused any of you harm...I only wanted to get back to my planet and battle Aku...the worst incarnation of evil...and I *got manipulated*."

Steven understood his words fully. He had fought the Diamonds, and their minions with his friends, so he knew about fighting villains. He agreed to help Jack in any way he could. "Jack, we'll do what we can to get you back to *your planet*...while you're at it, can you get the forces you commanded to *stand down*?"

Concurring with his assessment, Jack issued an order to his forces: to drop their weapons and admit defeat. The Gem soldiers were not keen on this approach, so they resisted. Steven saw this and called Lars, who said he would bring the liberated Gem warship near the planet's surface in an attempt to assist. On board, Lars gave an order to Fluorite. "Fluorite, calibrate the ship's engines so we can bring it near Mayet."

Glad to hear from the captain once more, she grinned. She had remained mostly silent as the battle had been raging on the planet's surface. She gladly obliged with his request. "It will be done, Captain Lars."

The Gem soldiers gulped in fear as they saw the huge *Trilliant Splitter* come through the atmosphere, its turrets pointed at them. Most put down their arms but *some* continued to fight, annoying Lars. The cannons began blasting at them, poofing those who remained one by one, while the guns of the *PAST* began blazing at full strength. Seeing their situation as hopeless, these soldiers gave up, even as the officers grumbled.

Even though they had the advantage of numbers, the firepower of the spaceship far exceeded anything that these Gems could produce. To make matters worse, a squad of students and professors, led by Yosira, approached, armed with quasars, bringing the Gems to their cells inside the brig of the *Trilliant Splitter*. The plan, by Steven and his comrades, was to send

these soldiers back to Homeworld where they could be *re-integrated* back into Homeworld's stratified society rather than menacing the Nile Galaxy.

While the fighting appeared to be over, there was much left to do. Mayet City and P.Y.R.A.M.I.D. needed to be repaired since the battle had caused a lot of damage. The ship of Lars and the Off Colors, the *OCAC*, remained in poor shape after Pearl and Adora had crash-landed it in the docking bay of the *Trilliant Splitter*. Brian could work his magic and bring the ship back to working order.

Dr. Queed would undoubtedly examine the new arrivals for his studies, adding his observations to the library's growing collections. Steven and the Gems had to return to Earth in order to oversee the World Parliamentary Assembly, which was aiming to make the Earth more peaceful. Additional issues lingered. Neither Catra nor Adora seemed to remember that Glimmer remained in Las Vistas with Kipo and her compatriots, who were attempting to control the wasteland. Despite this lapse of memory about their former friend, they, and their newfound friends, were aware of something else: Jack needed to return to his home planet.

Brian began probing his memory banks for a solution. Others worked to bring Mayet back into working order. Khepra and Kek were arrested for their treachery. A new leader of the P.Y.R.A.M.I.D. council would need to be chosen.

A few hours passed. Callie eagerly awaited the "present" that Cleo had promised her. She searched around for Cleo but could not find her. She walked up the stairs of the P.Y.R.A.M.I.D. dorms and reached the second floor. She saw a sign next to a door with the label "Room of Akila and Cleo" written in beautiful script, likely by Akila. Hesitantly she knocked on the door and cried out. "Hello, Cleosmoochtra...are you in there?"

Cleo, who lay on her bed, semi-resting, was awoken by Callie's voice. She tiptoed to the door. It opened so fast that both stepped back in shock. Realizing she had no choice but to let her in, she grumbled and responded to an anxious Callie. "Sure...you can come in...uh...what is it you want?"

Sheepishly, Callie, whose cheeks became bright red as blood began flowing to those areas, her body beginning to tingle, as her body temperature increased, she hemmed and hawed. Without much thought, she blurted something out, feeling even more embarrassed. "Please KISS me...now!"

Cleo was taken aback, not expecting these words from Callie, who continued to confuse her. Suddenly, the thought clicked in her head like a light bulb. She realized why Callie had come there. "Ooh...you are looking for your present...what I mentioned earlier...and you think it's a kiss...that's *not really* what I had in mind."

As she started snickering, Callie began crying, disappointed she had not "figured out" Cleo even after their newfound time together. Cleo rolled her eyes, knowing that it was a way to get her attention. She played along. She considered the idea of kissing Callie as a way of putting her in high spirits. Sighing, she laid out the conditions, looking Callie directly in her eyes. "Okay, Callipolli, I'll kiss you but only if you are fine with it...and it can't be some long and involved thing...to be clear, it's not like we are in a relationship or anything."

Callie nodded. Cleo put her arms around Callie's head, and brought her mouth closer to Callie's, while puckering her lips. Callie did the same. As their lips touched, Akila unexpectedly opened the door to the room, carrying a stack of books. When she swerved her eyes toward Cleo, she saw them smooching. It startled her so much that her heart missed a beat as the books fell out of her hands and onto the floor.

She began stuttering and weeping, angrily denouncing Cleo. "How could you? I...love-d...you...and this is how you *repay me*? In our room of all places? I thought you didn't like Callie! What is going on?"

She ran out of the room sobbing. Hearing this, Cleo quickly ended her smooching of Callie. She boisterously shouted, hoping Akila would hear. "Kiki! This isn't what it looks like!...I...can explain."

Callie slumped to the floor. She sat in a daze. Before leaving the room, Cleo whispered to Callie, telling her it would be better that she left, since her presence could cause more trouble. She agreed and solemnly filed out the door. Cleo waited until Callie had disappeared from her view. She then darted out the door, searching for Akila so she could explain everything before this became *more* of a mess.

End Notes

For this story, I used information from the pages "Alexandrite," "Pearl," "A Single Pale Rose," "Lars and the Cool Kids," "Sworn to the Sword," "Familiar (episode)," "Steven Universe (Character)," "Hessonite," "Garnets," "Gems," and "Light Prism," on the Steven Universe fandom site, and the "Catra" page on the She-Ra and the Princesses of Power fandom site. The song sung by Cleo is supposed to be a parody/knock off of the song in the Lolirock series titled "BFF." Some dialogue is somewhat based off the Steven Universe movie and even some lines adapted from "Star Wars: Return of the Jedi."

Update on 6/13/25: Due to a rash of spam comments from guest users (i.e. bots in this case), I have restricted commenting to only registered users. I'm sorry if you are a guest and you want to comment, but sadly, bots ruined it for everyone.

Please [drop by the Archive and comment](#) to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!